

Contact: David M. Buchanan (317-234-0297) dbuchanan@iwm.state.in.us

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 2, 2005

During WWII, motion pictures were used extensively to educate both soldiers and civilians about what was happening around the world. Most of these short films were discarded after release and never seen again. A few have made their way to home video, but not many. Some of these rare films can be seen again in a special program at the Indiana War Memorial.

Film historian Eric Grayson has worked for years with collectors--even fished some films out of trash bins--to preserve as much of this first-hand history as possible. A different theme will be offered each week, beginning Wednesday, May 4th and continuing each Wednesday through June 8, 2005.

May 4: PRELUDE TO WAR-- The US Government was concerned that it needed to educate the public on the reasons we were going to war, especially on the European front. They hired filmmaker Frank Capra, best remembered today for *It Happened One Night* (1934) and *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946), to make a series of documentaries on why we were fighting. This film is a short feature version of these documentaries, narrated by Walter Huston, and full of propaganda. It is little seen today but it served its purpose in making the war more understandable.

May 11: WW II CARTOONS. An hour of very rare cartoons from the era, including *Hell-Bent for Election* (1944) the UAW campaign cartoon for Roosevelt, two wartime Daffy Duck cartoons, four Private Snafu cartoons. The Snafu cartoons were written by Ted "Dr. Seuss" Geisel and produced by Warner Brothers.

May 18: WW II FOR THE HOME CROWD. During the war film distributors made highlight reels of battles and important events for use as brief news reports to schools, churches, and other local institutions. All are original films and will be projected on vintage equipment. There will be film on the devastation after Pearl Harbor and reports from the fronts. Many of the films are silent so period music will accompany them.

May 25: WW II GI FILMS, PART I. A selection of short films from the *Army/Navy Screen Magazine* intended to educate troops on events at home and in the war.

June 1: WW II GI FILMS, PART II. A selection of short films from the *Army/Navy Screen Magazine* intended to educate troops on events at home and in the war.

June 8: WW II GI TRAINING FILMS. Veterans remember the infamous training films covering mundane topics like cooking and wood chopping. They were nearly always accompanied by a flat narration reminding everyone of the obvious. Training sometimes included post-war adjustments, so filmgoers will see *Diary of a Sergeant* (1945) with Harold Russell, a rare instructional film that explores how a wounded soldier will need to adjust to civilian life. Russell went on to win an acting Oscar in 1946.

The presentations will begin at 7:00 pm at the Indiana War Memorial Pershing Auditorium. Admission is free. The Indiana War Memorial entrance is located at 50 East Michigan Street.

WHAT: WWII Original Film Presentations

WHEN: Wednesdays, beginning May 11 through June 8th, 7:00 p.m.

WHERE: Indiana War Memorial

COST: Free.

The Indiana War Memorial entrance is located at 50 East Michigan. Free weekend and after 6:00 p.m. parking all around block. The building is accessible for those with disabilities.

Museum COST: Admission is free.

For further information contact: 317-232-7615

<http://www.in.gov/iwm/>